

News Release

Office of Species Conservation

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RANCHERS TO RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT FOR WOLF RELATED LOSSES Applications Due April 20th To Receive Payment

Boise, Idaho – A major road block to wolf recovery has been reduced under the terms of an agreement between the Governor's Office of Species Conservation (OSC) and multiple Idaho counties. The agreement spells out details for the Idaho Wolf Depredation Compensation Program that will soon compensate ranchers for unconfirmed livestock losses and activities intended to minimize future wolf related losses.

"I'm so pleased we have finally brought the Compensation Program to closure," James Caswell, Administrator, Governor's Office of Species Conservation, said. "This is a key and important piece of business that contributes to a well rounded Wolf Management Program."

Funding for the Idaho Wolf Depredation Compensation Program comes from a federal \$100,000 earmark approved at the request of Sen. Larry Craig and the Idaho Cattle Association (ICA). The amount of compensation to each rancher will be determined by site-specific information regarding actual losses as documented in the required application. Ranchers anywhere in the State can apply but they will need to document losses on rangelands and private property before wolf re-introduction and after wolves returned to these ranges. From this historic evidence in the application, economic losses to ranchers will be determined and reimbursed based on market rates at the time of the loss. Defenders of Wildlife has and will continue to pay ranchers for 100% of the value of livestock "confirmed" as wolf kills, and 50% of the value of "probable" wolf kills. These additional funds will offset the additional, increased costs that ranchers in areas with wolves have absorbed since wolf re-introduction.

"The original wolf re-introduction program violated private property rights without providing just compensation. This Idaho Wolf Compensation Program will fairly reimburse a number of ranch families who have suffered major, sometimes devastating losses of income," commented Ted Hoffman, ICA President from Mountain Home. "This compensation program was developed by ranchers with the cooperation of state and local government and it is a major step towards solving this problem. We applaud the congressional delegation for obtaining the necessary federal funds and the Office of Species Conservation and county government for taking a leadership role in this activity."

Applications will be accepted for depredations that occurred between January 1, 2000 and the present time. Applicants will be eligible for compensation if the application and the necessary documents are **submitted by April 20, 2003**. The State, counties and ICA will work

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to obtain ongoing funding for the program and if future Congressional appropriations are received, the deadline for claims will be February 15 in subsequent years. Should the total of approved claims exceed the available funds, all approved claims will be paid at the ratio of total losses to available funds.

"Ranchers have been suffering for eight years because no payment is made if no dead calf is found. On the remote ranges of central Idaho, it is uncommon to confirm losses from predators," said Dr. Robert Cope, Chairman of the Lemhi County Commission. "In fact, the best estimate we have is that for every confirmed calf kill, between five and seven other calves simply disappear as wolf food. This program is late in coming, but at least we can finally get some compensation for the ranchers who have been paying personally for wolf re-introduction."

After the applications from affected ranchers are submitted, they will be reviewed by a compensation board consisting of representatives of county commissioners in wolf-affected areas. The initial Board will consist of one County Commissioner each (or his designee) from the counties of Clark, Custer, Fremont, Idaho, Lemhi, and Valley. Administrative details and processing will be handled by Lemhi County as chaired by Commissioner Robert Cope. Ranchers who wish to submit claims for livestock losses should submit their claims, along with all pertinent data and documentation, to:

IDAHO WOLF DEPREDAATION COMPENSATION BOARD

Attn: Lemhi County Clerk
206 Courthouse Drive
Salmon, Idaho 83467

A detailed package of information will soon be sent out from the Idaho Cattle Association and the Governor's Office of Species Conservation. The program criteria and instructions for filing a claim is available at <http://www.accessidaho.org/species/index.html>.

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